



# K A N S A S

JACK RICKERSON, DIRECTOR

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION  
DIVISION OF PERSONNEL SERVICES

KATHLEEN SEBELIUS, GOVERNOR  
HOWARD R. FRICKE, SECRETARY

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** State HR Directors and Staff  
**FROM:** Jack Rickerson  
**DATE:** January 12, 2004  
**SUBJECT:** Checking In

Happy New Year! I hope you all had the opportunity to enjoy the holidays, and that 2004 will be your best year yet.

It is coming up on one year now that we have collectively worked to change our system, to improve our capacity and effectiveness and to create efficiencies. I personally think the partnership is working well, and that we have accomplished a great deal of system change – all for the better.

I've had several opportunities during 2003 to measure and report on our progress. If I'm reading things right, our systems and processes are now more streamlined, value-based, and supportive of diverse needs.

I am very proud of our collective accomplishments, and grateful for your support, creativity, and dedication. I sincerely appreciate the opportunities you have given me, and I have enjoyed even the most protracted discussions.

My feeling is that what we have accomplished in terms of the way we do business is even more important than the system changes we have achieved. You have all been very gracious, patient, and dedicated in your teamwork and commitment.

Many of the system changes we have all accomplished are reflected in the changes to regulations we are proposing. We are moving forward with action to change or revoke 88 regulations. That count doesn't include a number of regulations we looked at and decided to wait for future opportunity. If you think about it, that is a lot of effort and progress.

The regulation changes are now being reviewed by D of A Legal and will then be sent to the Attorney General for final consideration before being published for comment. Because the Legislature is now in session, priority will need to be given to their issues, and it may be some time before we see action on the regulations. Once we hear back from the Attorney General, we will get out a summary of what will be published. If either D of A Legal or the Attorney General's Office modifies or decides not to go forward with a particular regulation, we will explain the logic given.

Our efforts this last year also included a review of merit system law to identify laws that should be changed, either to update language or to provide more support for the direction we are going. As a reminder, that direction is to find the right balance of centralized and decentralized personnel authorities to create greater capacity for effectively and efficiently managing the state's HR needs.

To minimize distractions from critical issues we anticipate to surface this Session, the Secretary has decided to hold on many of the changes to merit system law we have proposed. Since we will actually see more progress through the regulation process, we can hold on most of the statutory changes we have recommended until the 2005 Session.

I have been asked where we are with the HR teams we've had in place. Robbie Berry will be sending you an update this week. You will see that many of the teams have completed their work, that some continue full bore, and that some are struggling. I'm thinking we could talk in our February meeting about reassessing (and probably redirecting) our efforts in some areas.

A lot of what I think we will be doing in 2004 is follow-up and fine-tuning, concluding many of the efforts we started in 2003. From my perspective, I would like to see us do more in the areas of developing our capacity for diversity, our capabilities in coordinating training, a statewide New Employee Orientation program, and an organized and supported effort to add to the capacity of our workforce.

In terms of adding to the capacity of our workforce, I think we need to be looking at how we can promote family-friendly programs for state employees, how we hire and promote, how we manage changes within our organizations to be sure we have the right people in the right places, how we can build capacity in the area of dispute resolution, and how we can improve in our approach to managing discipline.

I would like to hear your thoughts on initiatives that you think we should pursue. We should talk about what yet needs to be done to improve service capability -- regulations, policies or processes that may need to be changed or eliminated; new initiatives; or systems or supports that need to be put in place. We can do that at our February meeting, and anytime you have the need and the opportunity.

We recognize that circumstances (and therefore needs) continuously change. Things that look good today may not look as good six months from now. And, we may have put something in place that isn't working as well as we had planned and now needs to be reconsidered. If you sense that we have lost sight of something we had promised, please bring that to our attention. We welcome your calls, letters, e-mails and visits.

What I saw in 2003 was a promise for even better things to come. We continue to appreciate your hard work and commitment to quality outcomes. We also continue to appreciate the leadership you demonstrate in managing teamwork and the daily management of critical responsibilities. Thank you for all you do, and how well you do it.